

# International School of the Sacred Heart

Tokyo, Japan



*Since 1908, a wooded Hiroo campus anchors Japan's oldest all-girls international school, blending Sacred Heart values with 23 AP courses.*

## RANKING DIMENSIONS

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Overall              | 71/100 |
| Academic outcomes    | 73/100 |
| University placement | 70/100 |
| Prestige & heritage  | 75/100 |
| Alumni network       | 74/100 |
| Facilities           | 72/100 |
| Transparency         | 72/100 |

## EDITOR'S VERDICT

A wooded Hiroo campus gives International School of the Sacred Heart a physical identity that many Tokyo schools lack: this is not a tower block school making do with city constraints, but an established all-girls campus with room for a turf field, tennis courts, a gymnasium, chapel and specialist labs. That matters, because ISSH sells a full-school experience rather than a narrow academic conveyor belt. It has operated since 1908, making it Japan’s oldest all-girls international school, and it still occupies a *\*distinctive\** niche: Catholic, English-medium, American curriculum, girls only, and firmly day-school rather than boarding. The academic offer has more edge than the school’s gentle name implies. Sixth form pupils can choose from *\*\*23 AP courses\*\**, and the school holds CIS and WASC accreditation as well

as IB World School status. The **\*\*1:8 student-teacher ratio\*\*** points to real adult attention, not mass delivery.

What puts ISSH on a shortlist is the combination of seriousness and shelter. Many parents want a girls' school without a brittle, hothouse culture; ISSH's strongest selling point is that it gives structure, ambition and visible pastoral intent without turning itself into a machine. The Sacred Heart framework will suit families who want faith-inflected values and service to be explicit rather than tucked away in a mission statement. The school's public emphasis on leadership from K3 to Grade 12, a long-running Nepal partnership, and participation in Far East Association sport shows a programme with breadth as well as conscience. The average annual day fee is **\*\*JPY 2,736,000\*\***, which places it in the *\*expensive\** bracket, but not at the outer edge of top-tier international-school pricing in Tokyo.

The right student for ISSH is a girl who will use a smaller, relational environment well: academically capable, happy in an all-female setting, and open to a school culture that takes community, service and conduct seriously. This is a strong fit for families who want American-style university preparation in Tokyo without giving up a *\*grounded\**, values-led atmosphere. It is less compelling for parents seeking a hard-driving co-ed environment, a secular ethos, or published headline exam data; the school talks confidently about matriculation and university readiness, but it does not publish aggregate AP results in the public domain. Even so, ISSH has a *\*clear market position\**: a long-established, *\*self-possessed\** girls' school with credible academic stretch, a rare central Tokyo campus, and a community model that will feel *\*deeply reassuring\** to the right family.

| STRENGTHS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | TRADE-OFFS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Founded in 1908 as part of a 200-year Sacred Heart educational legacy, making it Japan's oldest all-girls international school.</li><li>• Accredited by both the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Council of International Schools (CIS), and a founding member of JCIS.</li><li>• Offers up to 23 Advanced Placement courses, allowing high school students to earn university credit before graduating.</li><li>• Small, close-knit community of roughly 550 students with graduating classes of about 50, enabling high staff familiarity with each student.</li><li>• Belongs to the global Network of Sacred Heart Schools, giving access to affiliated institutions and exchange programmes across 44 countries.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Single-sex from Grade 1 onward; only the kindergarten intake (ages 3-5) is co-educational, so boys must transfer out after kindergarten.</li><li>• Annual tuition runs from roughly JPY 2,640,000 to JPY 2,940,000 depending on grade level, placing it among the pricier Tokyo day-school options.</li><li>• Catholic, values-based ethos rooted in the Society of the Sacred Heart may not suit families seeking a strictly secular curriculum.</li><li>• Small overall enrolment and graduating class size mean a narrower range of elective and subject choices than larger Tokyo international schools.</li></ul> |

## ADMISSIONS

Entry is possible at multiple grade levels, though kindergarten (ages 3-5, co-educational) is the widest entry point; from Grade 1 the school is girls-only through Grade 12. For K-8 applicants, at least one parent must be able to speak and read English, and the Admissions Board weighs language ability, educational background and prior schooling to maintain a balanced, diverse cohort. Class sizes are small (around 50 per graduating year), so places can be competitive at popular entry grades, particularly kindergarten and Grade 1.

## NOTABLE ALUMNI (13)

MUSIC: Yōko Narahashi, Giselle

DRAMA: Joan Fontaine, Maiko, Emma Miyazawa, Yōko Narahashi

VISUAL\_ARTS: Joan Fontaine, Nancy Lorenz

LETTERS: Joan Fontaine, Hiroko Kuniya, Akiko Konishi, Masako Shirasu, Juria Tachikawa

SCIENCE: Akiko Konishi

WTS RATING 

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